

Hilldale

*Annual
Tenant Report*



Our Vision and Values

Our tenants are at the... **heart** ...of what we do



Honesty

- *We do what we say we will do.*
- *We never mislead.*
- *We acknowledge mistakes, fix them, and learn from them.*



Empathetic

- *We care about Hilldale, our customers and colleagues.*
- *We take time to understand people's individual needs.*
- *We want to share and celebrate changes in people's lives.*



Accountable

- *We do not hide from our responsibilities as individuals, a team or as a business.*
- *We build trusted relationships.*
- *We offer value for money.*



Respectful

- *We treat everyone with respect and dignity.*
- *We value and actively encourage diversity.*
- *We put customers and communities at the heart of all we do.*
- *We want to look after our planet.*



Teamwork

- *We are one team.*
- *We share goals, ambitions, and targets.*
- *We are committed to strong leadership.*

“To provide and manage high quality homes for people who need additional support.”





2023-2026 Strategic Objectives

Great customer experience

Maximising occupancy

Operational efficiency

Achieving best practise

Making quality investments

Growth and diversification



Welcome

*from Dave Pickard,
Managing Director.*



***Hello and welcome
to Hilldale's Tenants
annual report.***

***We hope that you enjoy reading
this and find out more about
what we are doing and our
plans for the future.***

The last few years have been challenging for us all and post covid we are now facing the highest levels of inflation seen for the last 30 years.

We know the increases in Electricity and Gas prices are hitting our tenants hard and we are doing all we can to make sure that we can support them during this difficult time. During the last few years, we have remained focussed on delivering our best service to you alongside supporting and working with our partners and especially your Care providers.

Hilldale has seen some major changes in the last 2 years, and we have been working hard to provide a strong foundation for the organisation. This has involved working with our Group, Change Housing, alongside a dedicated Board and staff. Without their support we wouldn't be able to make the improvements that we hope you have seen and will continue to see in the future.



In the last year we completed our asset surveys of all the homes, and we now have **a plan to invest £29 million over the next 30 years** in improvements. This year will see the start of that investment focusing on both tenant's safety but also a programme of decoration, something that we know will be welcome to keep our buildings looking good. **Our focus on your safety continues to be our top priority and we have spent £214K** this year making sure that all the safety checks are completed when they are due.

In the past few months, we have made some changes to our Housing Management systems and this alongside some staffing changes will allow us to improve our repairs service ensuring that we can respond more quickly and to a better standard. We know how important the repairs service is to our tenants and partners. **We will also introduce the opportunity to feedback your thoughts on the service so that we can use this to improve further.**

We want to hear what you think about your home and our services so that we know what we need to focus on. In the last year we have started to engage more with our tenants and our approach to satisfaction surveys will enable us to hear from you more often. From our side we also have committed to communicating with you more and in ways that enable you to have a louder voice and become more involved in how Hilldale delivers its services.

Whilst we have made improvements in the way we do things we also have a way to go in some areas. We are ambitious and have shown over the last couple of years that we want to make a difference and that we aren't afraid to make those big decisions to get us moving quickly in the right direction.

Finally, without the support of our tenants, partners, the Board and staff at Hilldale we couldn't continue to do the things we do. Can I just say a big thank you for all the hard work and support.

**Over the next 30 years,
we plan to invest**

£29m

**in improvements to
your homes**

***We have come along way but
we have ambitious plans to do
even more in the future,
so watch this space.***



What is **Hilldale**?

First established in Wigan in 2009 we recognised that accommodation wasn't available to provide a home for people who needed some help and support. So, from those small beginnings Hilldale has grown to over 1000 homes based all over England and Wales.

"The sole purpose of our existence is to provide high quality housing to people who need additional support".

We only provide homes for people who need help to live more independently, in their own home, in their own community and who would otherwise have difficulty finding a home elsewhere. We offer homes for life, or for as long as tenants need and want our services.

In 2013 we became a Registered Provider of social housing meaning that we are a Regulated body, currently by the Regulator of Social housing. This provides reassurance that high standards are set, maintained, and monitored. In November 2020 we joined the Change Housing



Group which basically meant that they became our parent. They oversee what we do but also have been instrumental in supporting us to transform the business. The group also help by providing services to us like repairs and maintenance, asset management, finance, HR, Payroll and ICT.

At about the same time as we joined the Change Group, a new Board and Management Team were put in place. With experience of the Regulated sector the Board pointed out that the Governance and services of the organisation needed to improve and that they would work with the Regulator to put that right. In March 2021 the Regulator served Hilldale with a notice indicating areas that needed to be improved. Since that time the Board and management team have been working hard to address these areas of weakness and to put Hilldale on a firmer foundation. We continue to meet and work with the Regulator to provide assurance that we are meeting the required standard.

Our performance highlights



1089
homes



29
new homes



924
tenants

HILDALE 
housing association



293
new tenants



empty homes
reduced by
50%



9042
repairs



100%
Gas services
safety certificates

Total rent collected

£11,979,585.00



Meet the Team

Our People

Housing officers play a vital role working closely with our care providers and tenants. One of our housing officers below has detailed what a day in the life of her role entails.



My name is Sam Downes and I'm one of Hilldale's eight Housing Officers.

My role is to work closely with our tenants from sign up and throughout their tenancy. I ensure all documents are ready for new tenants to sign up and that our income team have all the relevant information to apply to housing benefit on the tenant's behalf. If a tenant requires furniture to make their house a home I make sure that's ordered for them and ready when they move in. During the tenant's time with Hilldale I will continue to support them, should that be from support to help paying their rent, service charge or utilities to working with the care staff and our inhouse repairs team to keep our properties safe and well maintained. Sometimes we may occasionally have to manage disputes between tenants for a variety of reasons and we will work with all parties to come to a solution.



Each month I will visit the schemes in my area to perform compliance checks such as making sure all the fire alarms and emergency lighting have been tested and working to standard. I check the lifts are working as they should and the communal areas. This is to make sure they are clean and tidy and don't have any hazards. I also make sure the gardens are neat and tidy. Every year I will visit the tenant's property to make sure all is okay and its being kept as it should be. Fortunately, most of our homes are well looked after by our tenants but sometimes I have to encourage tenants to clean and tidy their home.

I get to work with lots of different people in my role such as the tenants themselves, care providers, social workers, fire safety officers, and various contractors. I really enjoy supporting my tenants to live in their homes.



Our Tenants

It is important to us at Hilldale that our tenants feel a sense of community within their homes.



Wellgate support our tenants at The Old Printers in Sandbach and this year invited us along to The Easter Egg Hunt they had arranged for the tenants. The staff at Hilldale decided to donate lots of Easter eggs to the scheme to take along on the day so there was plenty to be found.

The tenants really enjoyed the Easter Egg Hunt and found all the eggs in record time. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed coffee and cake, and had a nice chat about plans for the King's Coronation. The tenants have been making crafts to sell on a stall at a village event. Michelle, the Scheme Manager told us all about how involved the tenants are within their community and even volunteer at the local foodbank.



We recently went back to the scheme for the King's Coronation and helped the tenants on their stalls.



Working with our Residents

16



Tenant Engagement meetings

Our tenants are at the **HEART** of what we do and we are proud to have a new Customer Engagement Strategy that encourages and promotes our tenants voice. To ensure we are listening, and our tenants are influencing our services **since September we have held 16 tenant engagement meetings**. Meeting with our tenants, care providers and family members getting to know them and to hear their feedback on our services and what matters most to them.

If you are interested in arranging a meeting and would like to work with us please get in touch.

The Regulator of Social Housing announced in September 2022 that landlords from April 2023 will be expected to survey their tenants on how satisfied they are with the service provided by their landlord.

This is a set of 12 questions we ask and we must collate this data and report the findings by summer 2024. We will be working closely with our Housing Officers and tenants to capture this over the next year. We conducted a pilot study of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, see a snapshot of the results below.

53

survey
respondents

84%

thought we provided a well maintained home.

87%

were satisfied with the service we provide.



Your feedback



10 compliments received and 22 complaints logged - of those:

- 12 upheld
- 5 partially upheld
- 5 not upheld
- 1 escalated to stage 2

In line with the Housing Ombudsman, we revised our complaints handling code and implemented a new way of handling complaints from September 2022. We encourage you to tell us when you are not happy with our service so we can put things right, we also encourage you to feedback where we are doing well too.

** stats taken from October 2022 until March 2023



What have we learnt

Although we would like to, we don't always get it right first time, feedback allows us to improve our service.

We identified our repairs service wasn't up to our high standard and **in February 2023 we restructured the repairs team to provide a better service** to you. Since then we have received feedback that this has really improved.



You have fed back that sometimes when contractors visit your home to carry out repairs, they are not always aware of your requests



(such as phoning before). We are working to ensure that all our visits to your home are in line with your requests.

Communication is an area you feel needed improvement, as well as our annual reports and new website coming soon we have hosted a care providers forum to update all care providers on new ways of working with Hilldale ensuring we will work to increase communication through a variety of channels.

You can find full details of our complaints process and our self-assessment on our website.



Your rent and how we spent it

Hilldale saw a deficit of **£0.2m** in the year, markedly **reduced from the deficit of £0.8m in the 7 months to July 2021**. The team has worked hard to secure additional mitigations and efficiencies, so that losses are halted and a return to surplus is expected in the financial year ended July 2023. **Staffing levels have reduced** as we have transferred finance and repairs staff into the group. This has achieved savings although we get recharged for services from the group. Our financial and operational performance is thoroughly inspected by our management team, our Board, the housing regulator, funders and our auditors.

Deficit reduced by

£0.6m 



Value for money

Value for money or VFM is at the heart of the services we deliver. We want to ensure that we can offer the best services at the right price. In order to achieve that last year we:

- *Reviewed all our services and service charges to you*
- *Renewed our Housing Management System making major improvements to data security and the way we work for the same annual cost*
- *Agreed to a new way of delivering the repairs service in the South of England that will improve the speed of repairs, reduce costs and increase satisfaction.*



27 full-time staff
down to

17



This data is also illustrated in
the pie charts overleaf.

Where the money comes from

INCOME TYPES	ACTUAL 2021/22	WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM
Rents	£12.2m	93%
Service Charges	£0.7m	6%
Income from other places	£0.2m	1%
TOTAL	£13.1M	

Day to day operating and running cost

EXPENDITURE TYPES	ACTUAL 2021/22	DAY TO DAY OPERATING AND RUNNING COST
Operating lease rentals	£8.2m	62%
Management Costs	£2.4m	19%
Reactive maintenance	£1.0m	8%
Service charge costs	£1.0m	8%
Planned Maintenance	£0.2m	2%
Major Works	£0.1m	1%
TOTAL	£13.0M	

Where the money comes from

1%
Income from other places

6%
Reactive maintenance

93%
Rents

62%
Operating lease rentals

19%
Management costs

Day to Day Operating and Running costs

1%
Major works

2%
Planned maintenance

8%
Service charge costs

8%
Reactive maintenance



Our *investment* plans

We have created an asset plan to ensure we are investing back into our properties, over the next 5 years we will:



Decorate the communal areas of 108 Schemes

Install 65 new bathrooms and 42 kitchens



Replace the boilers at 10 Schemes



Replace the communal flooring in 49 Schemes



Looking Ahead



Listen to you

We will carry on with our surveys and feedback to you, letting you know what we have changed.



Keep you safe

Continue to make sure your home is safe.



We will improve our communication

So you have a better experience when you contact us. This will include a new look website.

Improve our homes

We will provide you with information about when work will be completed to your home in the year ahead.





We will keep you informed by publishing details of our response to reported issues in the next issue of this report.



Mould and damp

Our recent focus on this has come on the back of the tragic death of Awaab Ishak who sadly died as a result of the mould and damp in his home. We have responded to this by putting in place a new procedure that aims to quickly address any reported issues and to carry out an annual inspection of our homes.

You should, in the last two months, have received a letter outlining our approach to dealing with the issue. If you have any repairs to report or any concerns about damp and mould then please don't hesitate to contact us either directly or through your Care provider.

Energy efficiency

Working together with you to make our homes more efficient.

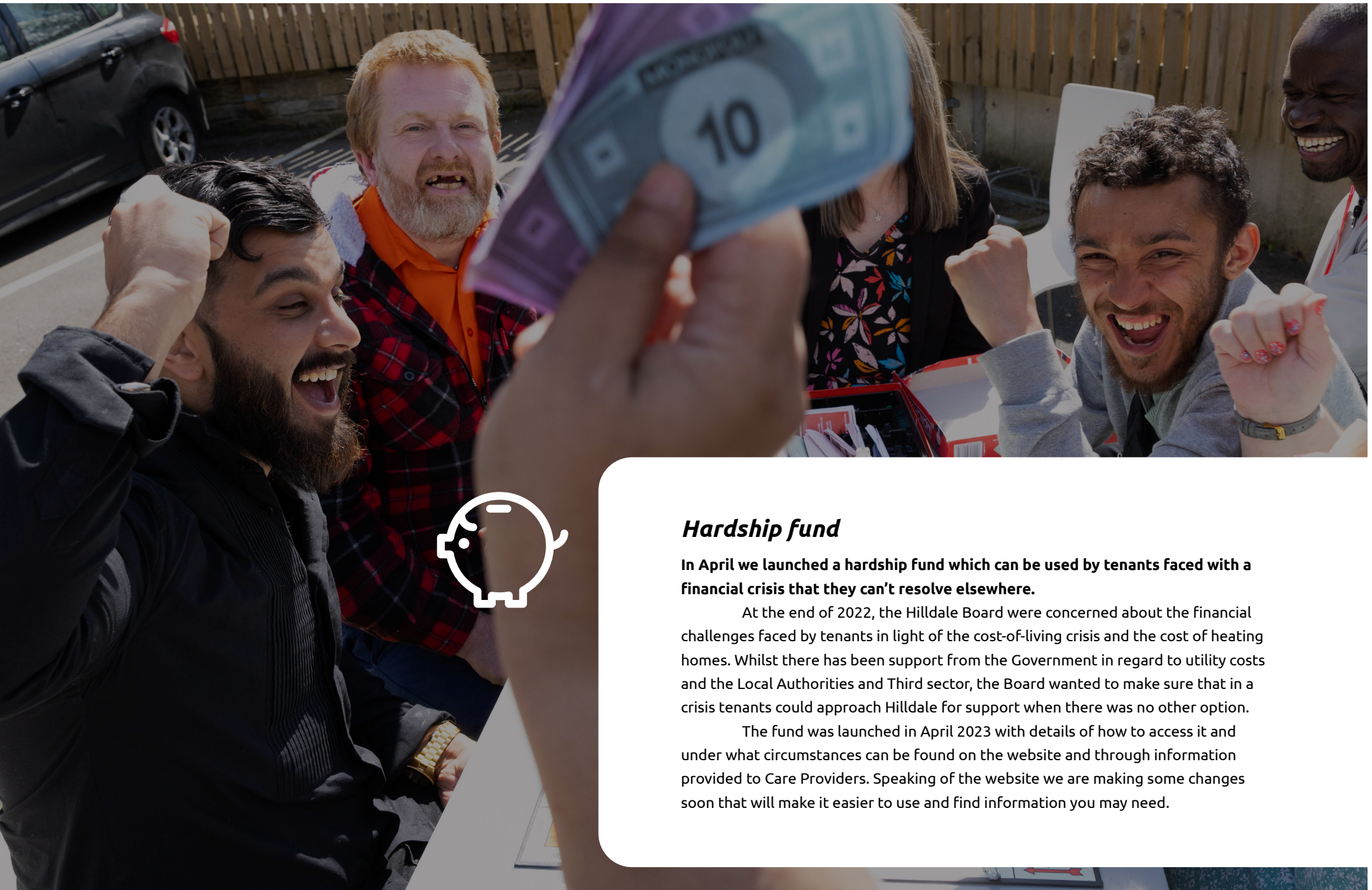


HILLDALE
housing association

Keeping our homes warm we know is a challenge with the rising cost of fuel and we all want to help reduce carbon emissions to save our planet. We are looking at how we can make our homes more energy efficient (a minimum of Energy Performance Certificate band C) by 2030.

The first part of this is to work with our Head Landlords to look at the measures we can take on our properties that currently fall below band C. This will involve surveys of your home to initially look at the scale of the challenge and then decide what we can do to make improvements which will reduce your energy bills and bring benefit to our environment. Some of the improvements will be small things that make a difference whilst in other properties we have already installed some solar panels.





Hardship fund

In April we launched a hardship fund which can be used by tenants faced with a financial crisis that they can't resolve elsewhere.

At the end of 2022, the Hilldale Board were concerned about the financial challenges faced by tenants in light of the cost-of-living crisis and the cost of heating homes. Whilst there has been support from the Government in regard to utility costs and the Local Authorities and Third sector, the Board wanted to make sure that in a crisis tenants could approach Hilldale for support when there was no other option.

The fund was launched in April 2023 with details of how to access it and under what circumstances can be found on the website and through information provided to Care Providers. Speaking of the website we are making some changes soon that will make it easier to use and find information you may need.



High quality homes for people who need additional support.

HILLDALE 
housing association



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General email:
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Repairs email:
repairs@hilldale.org.uk



More information:
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